

Iowa's First Survey

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cratic form of government instead of a republican form of government.

Before we desert the Republic for a Democracy, let us ask ourselves whether the leaders seeking such a change have the greatness, the sincerity, the wisdom, and the unselfishness of Washington, Franklin, Madison, and the other leaders in the early days of the Republic.—Wayne C. Townsley in the *Journal* of the Illinois State Historical Society.

IOWA'S FIRST SURVEY

David Dale Owen: Pioneer Geologist of the Middle West. 180 pp. Illustrated. A new book by Prof. Walter Brookfield Hendrickson. Published by the Indiana Historical Bureau, Indianapolis, Ind.

One hundred years ago, when the geology and mineral resources of the Mississippi valley were largely unknown, the star of Dr. David Dale Owen rose and for a score of years shown with great brightness above the lower waters of the Wabash at New Harmony, Indiana. Born in New Lanark, Scotland on June 24, 1847, and broadly educated in Europe and America, Doctor Owen became successively the first State Geologist of Indiana, in 1837, Kentucky in 1854 and Arkansas in 1857.

In the meantime, beginning in the mid-summer of 1839, he accepted appointment as field geologist and principal agent of the United States in which he was engaged intermittently until 1852 when the manuscripts, sections and maps he and his associates had prepared were issued from the press of the Federal Government. In them was revealed for the first time in comprehensive form the results of his reconnoissance surveys of a very broad area now comprising large portions of the states of Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

These reports, together with numerous lesser papers presented before scientific societies in this country and abroad, outlined generally the stratigraphy, structure and mineral resources of a vast area that has since become the industrial, agricultural and population heart of America. Although done at all times under great pressure and in

spite of unbelievable physical hardships, incident to the wild and unsettled nature of the country at the time, the accuracy of his geological findings and interpretations was such that the unmeasured work of many careful investigators in this broad area down to this day has done little to disturb it. And furthermore, this statement also may be applied in truth to the work he did on the Indiana, Kentucky and Arkansas State Geological Surveys.

But the weight of this great effort—summarized in some eleven volumes on nearly as many states—the hardships in the field, the laboratory, and the office undermined a body, which never strong, had been under the lash of an indomitable will urging through the years more, ever more and broader fields of geological service in the virgin west. Consistently he refused to hear the alarms of succeeding and severe bodily ailments. Driven on by an inward fire and zeal for accomplishment which had been the mainspring of his life's great labors he literally dropped in exhaustion and died, November 13, 1860—only 53 years of age.

To the brief obituaries of newspaper and scientific journals of the time, including the appreciative sketch by Dr. Robert Peter, which was published in the last of the Kentucky reports in 1861, must be added the pointed, yet pathetic comment of the noted geologist, J. P. Lesley of the Pennsylvania Survey to his contemporary Dr. James Hall, State Geologist of New York—"Poor Owen is dead, suicide!"

In this new book Professor Hendrickson has notably succeeded in recreating the real David Dale Owen whose energy, insight and applied scientific scholarship laid down dependable conceptions for the *first* time of the geology and mineral resources of the upper and middle Mississippi valley. This biography is one, carefully written and thoroughly documented, that can be recommended without reserve to all geologists and historians in this part of the United States.

Willard Rouse Jillison, Sc.D.

Former State Geologist of Kentucky.

—From *Register of Kentucky State Historical Society*.

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